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CIA might renew Cuban-exile ties

From Herald Staff and Wire Reports

WASHINGTON — The CIA is considering the renewal of cooperation with anti-Castro Cuban exiles as part of a general expansion of its covert operations.

The plan is regarded as "silly" by some officials on the ground that the exiles — some of whose groups have waged a clandestine private war against Cuba since the Bay of Pigs fiasco 20 years ago next month — cannot be controlled.

But the idea has strong advocates within the

CIA. President Reagan and Secretary of State Alexander Haig have spoken of resisting Communist arms shipments to El Salvador by striking at "the source," apparently alluding to Cuba. Enlisting the exile groups for that purpose makes sense to some intelligence officials.

But other officials said that to recruit the Cubans for guerrilla warfare would violate the administration's stated anti-terrorism policies. Also, they said, all the exile groups put together would not be capable of toppling Castro.

Militant Cuban exile organizations based in Miami said they would welcome CIA support — if the terms were right.

"We would have to be their equal," said Juan Perez Franco, president of the Bay of Pigs Association-Brigade 2506. "We won't be slaves."

Pedro Pablo Rojas, director of information for the military division of Brigade 2506, said the U.S. government should support anti-Castro ac-

tivity directly with arms and assistance.

"If President Reagan is willing to send arms to the Afghan rebels, he should give us arms to fight against Castro," said Rojas.

"We will not be someone else's employees," echoed Andres Nazario Sargen, secretary general of Alpha 66. "The fight for the liberation of Cuba belongs to the Cubans."

Tony Varona, national secretary of the Cuban Patriotic Junta, an umbrella group for more than 100 Cuban exile organizations, said a joint venture between his organization and the CIA would be acceptable only if his group could draw up the plans and carry them out.

One group came out against working with the CIA. Ricardo Aparicio, national press secretary for Abdala, said, "The era of covert activities is over. It never worked. Castro is still in power. The U.S. government has come to the realization that the route they must take is to help the revolutionary elements within Cuba that are fighting against the system."

Whatever happens to the CIA in the case of the Cuban exiles, there is no doubt that the organization is in the midst of a resurgence.

The CIA sustained heavy personnel reductions and a major cut-back of activities under former President Jimmy Carter, but its current revival has the direct authorization of Reagan, according to one top official, and likewise is supported by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. Both men are reported to feel that the agency was unnecessarily shackled by Carter and Congress in recent years.

Among the other plans under consideration:

- Repealing restrictions on supplying covert military support to Angolan guerrillas fighting a Cuban-backed Marxist regime in that West African nation.

- Providing arms directly to Afghan guerrillas resisting 85,000 Soviet troops who occupied their country 15 months ago. Some clandestine equipment already has been supplied through Egypt, which has shipped Soviet-made arms to the guerrillas and replenished its own arsenal with weapons from the U.S.

- Rewriting an executive order that restrained CIA domestic intelligence-gathering operations. Under a "wish list," drafted by CIA lawyers, the attorney general would delegate to intelligence officials the authority to approve wiretaps and break-ins against suspects in national-security cases. The existing order, drafted in 1978, requires the attorney general to authorize specific wiretaps and break-ins. Under the proposed revision, he would merely authorize "categories" of surveillance techniques; intelligence officials would approve specific instances.

- Arming Cambodian exiles in Thailand to fight the Vietnamese occupation of their homeland. The former Cambodian ruler, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, is currently trying to rally Cambodian forces to fight the Vietnamese. Secretary of State Haig has said he sees nothing objectionable about assistance to the exiles. CIA Director William Casey is currently in Japan on a "routine familiarization trip" that may also be an attempt to assess Asian support for the Cambodian emigres.